




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville Ring Road; Voluntary Assisted Dying

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.30 pm): Why do I always have to follow her? I want to talk about something really positive, and that is Townsville Ring Road stage 5. This is a \$230 million road project, duplicating the—

Mr Power: Stage 5?

Mr HARPER: Stage 5. It is the final stage. I know members are going to ask where it starts. Yes, it does start at Riverway Drive and it travels six kilometres. Seriously, we have had fatalities on this stretch of road. It is the last piece of the road that needs duplicating. When I came into this place, I wanted to concentrate on reducing road trauma. I lobbied hard for this in 2017 and received \$46 million to start the project. Of course, we had to wait for a federal election to get their contribution, which federal Labor did commit to, and the LNP. It took a couple of years to get the project going but we got there.

This will create 400 jobs. It is part of our strong economic recovery in Townsville. It is part of the Palaszczuk government's \$27 billion, four-year roads and transport investment plan to support 24,000 jobs, which are absolutely vital in all of our communities. I was proud to visit the site the other day. I met Alex, who is so proud to have so much local content. There is over 89 per cent local content on that road that is underway right now.

I have worked very closely with the community to get sound barriers put up near Carlyle Gardens. There are over 500 aged-care residents there and that was their concern. Importantly, this was a catalyst for a half a billion dollar housing estate that will be built. That means more tradies and more jobs. They will get connectivity from Beck Drive, with new on- and off-ramps connecting them to the hospital, to the nation's biggest defence base, Lavarack Barracks, and to JCU. These are our biggest employers. When there is increased connectivity, it is a real positive for people who are coming to live in the area. We are seeing a lot of investment in Thuringowa, and I want to thank the main roads minister for being there the other day for the sod turn.

A government member interjected.

Mr HARPER: He is the best main roads minister I have ever met. He is committed. We have a briefing this week on Riverway Drive stage 2, and I will update the House on these projects and the milestones as we go.

I want to depart from that topic and talk about a ministerial statement this morning from the health minister on palliative care. What we are debating this week is so important. I want to address the Leader of the Opposition's disgraceful, out-of-touch contribution on it where he accused us of a party vote. This is a free vote. He demonstrated a lack of compassion, a lack of empathy and a lack of understanding of palliative care and how it is funded in this state and in the nation. He said he had considered everything. He clearly has not read the 77 recommendations the health committee made in regards to how palliative care is funded.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr HARPER: Go grab the book because you cannot hide behind the veil of palliative care.

Mr KRAUSE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is anticipating debate on another bill and I ask you to direct him to refrain from doing that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): I will take some instructions. Member for Thuringowa, by referring to the report, you are anticipating and going into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill debate. However, you might like to talk in a general sense about palliative care.

Mr HARPER: I might talk to the health minister's contribution around palliative care. I will inform members that there are two recommendations in the palliative care report. Recommendation No. 53 refers to the Australian government, and it is just before our recommendation that the Queensland government increase palliative care, which it did. Recommendation No. 53 states—

The committee recommends that the Australian Government increase the amount available through subacute funding for the delivery of palliative care to address the unmet need for services.

People need to understand how it is done. Recommendation No. 56 states—

The committee recommends that the Australian Government properly fund palliative care and end-of-life care services provided to residents living in private homes or in residential aged care facilities so residents can access the clinical care, nursing and specialist palliative care services they require. This will involve providing greater flexibility in the home care package system ...

We heard in this report—which is separate to the one that is being dealt with in the House—about people who were dying while waiting for their level 4 home care packages.

Ms Pease interjected.

Mr HARPER: The member for Lytton will remember that lady who said that the home care package arrived but her husband had died two years earlier. If we get the funding right at a national level—and our committee did a considerable amount of work on that—we might go a long way to addressing this. I hope they can match or double or triple the state's contribution. There is an absolute need to understand how palliative care is funded in this nation.